



The Experiences of an American Soldier in the War of 1812-14

**By
The Honourable William Renwick Riddell**



**An Address before the Empire Club
of Canada, Toronto**

P2448

P53

THE EXPERIENCES OF AN AMERICAN SOLDIER IN THE WAR OF 1812-14.

An Address delivered by the HONOURABLE WILLIAM RENWICK RIDDELL, LL.D., etc., Justice of the Supreme Court of Ontario, before the Empire Club of Canada, Toronto, November 6th, 1913.

We Canadians are by no means unduly modest in the estimate we place upon ourselves or our country—and we do not forget to glory in our past.

The Scottish Bard has it:—

"O wad some Power the giftie gie us
To see oursels as ithers see us!
It wad frae mony a blunder free us
An' foolish notion."

I doubt that it would have much effect—man is a stubborn creature: let it might have some little chastening influence. And perhaps the knowledge of how another looked upon our land and some of its inhabitants a hundred years ago may be for our good.

Samuel White, of Adams County, Pennsylvania, published at Baltimore, in 1830, a little 12 mo. with the title:—

"HISTORY
OF THE
AMERICAN TROOPS
DURING
THE LATE WAR
UNDER THE COMMAND OF
COLONELS FENTON AND CAMPBELL

Giving an account of the crossing of the Lake from Erie to Long Point: also the crossing of Niagara by the troops under Gen'ls. Gaines, Brown, Scott and Porter. The taking of Fort Erie, the battle of Chippewa, the imprisonment of Col. Bull, Major Galloway, and the

author (then a captain) and their treatment: together with an historical account of the Canadas:

BY SAMUEL WHITE
OF ADAMS COUNTY, PENN.
BALTIMORE
PUBLISHED BY THE AUTHOR
B. EDES, PRINTER
1830"

Claiming to be "a plain man himself" he did not attempt "to embellish his narrative with high-flown language, nor to impose upon the credulous a string of fictitious adventures," but offered "a plain statement of facts" only. He warns his readers, too, that although he has been forced to speak of Englishmen very harshly in many instances, all of that nation are not such as he has described, "he has had the pleasure of knowing many, who were an honour to their country." So fortified, we approach Capt. White's story.

The Governor of Pennsylvania in 1814 called out the militia of that state to the number of 1,000 to repel the inroads of the British on the northern frontier. The Pennsylvanians do not seem to have been any more eager to fight than they had been fifty years before when Amherst found it impossible to get any troops from that province to fight the common enemy, the Indian, "which," says Amherst, "places them in the most despicable light imaginable." However it may have been in 1763, in 1814 Major Galloway and Captain White held a court martial for the trial of delinquents, "and after several days of arduous exertion, completed our business by the assessment of fines to the amount of over forty thousand dollars." That looks like a fairly large sum to make out of delinquents in a call of one thousand militia.

(In an American book by M. Carey, "The Olive Branch," of which the first edition appeared at Philadelphia in 1814, and others including the sixth, in 1815, it is stated (at p. 381 of the sixth edition) that the fine in Pennsylvania upon a militia man for desertion was

\$32 for a private and \$31 for a non-commissioned officer.)

The force camped near Erie—an expedition was intended against Long Point on the other side of Lake Erie under the command of Col. Campbell of the 11th United States Infantry. The invading force composed of four hundred regulars and five hundred volunteers, crossed over, May 15th and 16th. A company of dragoons fired upon the boats from the Canadian shore; but before the actual landing, they retreated—no doubt to join the remainder of the troop, which as we know from other sources, were with a small party of Canadian militia, holding Fort Dover.

All the night of the 16th and all day of the 17th, the Americans remained "in a piece of woods near the lake exposed to the rain which poured upon us * * having no shelter except the boughs of the trees under which we rested." Next morning they crossed "Buffaloe Creek" and marched for Port Dover, having adopted what Capt. White thinks "a very politic and ingenious mode of forming," that is, "in single file, showing our whole force in front." Passing over the question whether that formation is what a military man would call "single file," we follow the troops. The British troops retreated as the invaders entered the village, and "when we reached Dover we found it deserted by all but a few women, who had white clothes hanging upon broomsticks suing for peace." So far our author agrees with reports from Canadian sources: but here begins a marked difference in the story. White says that the only hostile demonstration on their part was the destruction of some mills which were employed making flour for the army, and some houses occupied as stores—but he admits that they did burn some houses belonging to officers who had been engaged in the expedition against "Buffaloe" and Black Rock the year before. He says that "strange as it may appear, it is not the less true, that on the very day after the British came to Dover, they burnt all the houses we had left standing." One must agree that it does appear very strange indeed—especially when the Canadians say that

the Americans burned the whole place to the ground, mills, distilleries and private houses; and add "a more wanton and barbarous wrong cannot be conceived."

A still stranger thing than the British burning their own houses is the weird fact that the one man who had been taken prisoner by the Americans but set free on their retreat, was, says White, promptly hanged by his people when they returned to Dover.

The invading force were some three days on the lake on their return voyage; and the whole expedition lasted some five days.

Col. Campbell being brought to book sent an impudent letter to the British General: he was afterwards court-martialed for his scandalous conduct, but escaped with a rebuke—the court declaring that the burning of the mills and distilleries was according to the rules of war, but the burning of the private houses was an error in judgment. It is in reference to this exploit that the Rev'd. John Strachan in his trenchant and unanswerable letter to ex-President Jefferson, January 30th, 1815, writes as follows:—

"On the 15th of May a detachment of the American army under Colonel Campbell, landed at Long Point, district of London, Upper Canada, and on that and the following day, pillaged and laid waste as much of the adjacent country as they could reach. They burnt the village of Dover, with the mills, and all the mills, stores, distillery and dwelling houses in the vicinity, carrying away such property as was portable, and killing the cattle. The property taken and destroyed on this occasion was estimated at fifty thousand dollars."

This is how Kingsford puts it:—

"Colonel Campbell's feat, with 500 regular troops, was to lay waste the surrounding district to the greatest extent he was able, he and his men robbing the inhabitants of their private property. He destroyed a saw-mill and tannery, 5 distilleries, 6 stores, 13 barns, 3 grist-mills, 10 dwelling houses; turning out from sheer malignity, amid the burning embers, 25 ruined families to shift in the future as they best could. Such was the

conduct characterized by Colonel Winfield Scott as an 'error of judgment.'"

The following is from a report by Major-General Riall to Sir Gordon Drummond, dated Fort George, May 19th, 1814:

"Sir,—I have the honor to transmit to you a report made to me by Colonel Talbot, commanding the militia in the London district, that on the 14th inst., a party of the enemy, consisting of about 1,800 men, had crossed Lake Erie from Presqu' Isle and landed near Dover, which place, together with the mills and stores in its neighbourhood they destroyed, and after having committed every other excess possible, re-embarked. They showed a disposition to land again at Turkey Point, but were, it is supposed, deterred from doing so by the appearance of a body of militia and a detachment of the 19th Dragoons, whom Colonel Talbot had assembled at that place. When Colonel Talbot had despatched his report the enemy's vessels were at anchor at the extremity of Long Point. Should they again attempt to land I hope they will be received by a detachment of troops and Indians which I ordered from Burlington under the command of Lieut.-Colonel Parry, 103d Regt., upon receiving the first intelligence of their attempt.

Sir Gordon Drummond reports to Sir George Prevost from Kingston, May 27th, 1814.

"Sir,—In my letter which I had the honour to address to Your Excellency on the 21st inst., I stated that a force of the enemy, at that time supposed to be about 300, had landed near Dover on Lake Erie. I have now the honour to transmit a letter from Major-General Riall conveying a report of Colonel Talbot, commanding the militia of the London District, on the subject. Your Excellency will, however, perceive that the force of the enemy has since been computed to consist of about 800 men, whose conduct has been disgraced during their short stay ashore by every act of barbarity and of illiberal and unjustifiable outrage. Not only a large store, fitted as a barrack for the militia, but every private house and other building belonging to the peaceable in-

habitants of the village and neighbourhood of Dover has been reduced to ashes, together with Ryerse's and Finch's mills between that place and Turkey Point. The court house and public buildings at Turkey Point were only saved by the appearance of the militia and a detachment of the 19th Light Dragoons, both of which corps I have very great satisfaction in acquainting Your Excellency, evinced the strongest anxiety to come in contact with the enemy.

I have likewise received from Lieutenant-Colonel Parry of the 103d Regiment, the most satisfactory accounts relative to the conduct of the grenadier company of that corps and the light company of the 89th, placed under his immediate orders. The latter, he says, are wild, but with attention and management perfectly tractable and orderly, and Lieut.-Colonel Parry bestows much commendation on the zeal and alacrity with which the militia assembled, considering the distance from whence they were to be collected. The Lieut.-Colonel from all these circumstances feels convinced that had not the enemy retired to his shipping before his arrival, his little band, increased by a few of the rangers and Kent volunteers as well as some persons and some Wyandot Indians who joined him from Amherstburg, would have made the enemy pay dear for their outrages. He states that but one house, in which a sick woman resided, was left standing between Paterson's Creek and Turkey Point, and the enemy on retiring avowed their intention to destroy Port Talbot in a similar manner. And as their officers appear determined to pursue the same system throughout the whole of the western frontier, I feel convinced that nothing but the most vigorous opposition to such disgraceful proceedings will prevent a recurrence of them."

Capt. White does not seem to think there was anything wrong or irregular in the raid—indeed, he seems rather astonished at the moderation of himself and his comrades. Next day orders came for a march to Buf-falo, but this was checked for a time by a mutiny. White arrested the ringleader, and the march proceeded. Entering New York State they noticed a great

scarcity of men in that part of the state, "many I presume had been killed by the enemy" the year before. We must not omit to notice the unholy glee exhibited by the Cataraugus Indians, "and their squaws who appeared very much pleased to see us, more particularly as they understood we were going to fight the British."

The houses along the road were "literally crammed with ladies collected * * to see us as we passed through the country"—and the gallant captain "would strongly recommend all who may be in want of handsome wives to visit the borders of Lake Erie, for I have never seen before or since in any part of the country more beautiful and elegant looking ladies." It seems almost too bad that the captain was already married—but so it was.

Losing a few men by desertion they arrived at Buffalo and found a body of U. S. regulars there with Gen. Brown in command. July 2nd they crossed over the river, and the next day took Fort Erie with its garrison of 137 men "including officers." Then the general ordered a march to meet "the enemy who lay entrenched in his works upon the plains of Chippewa." We know from other sources that this force was under the command of Gen. Riall and Col. Pearson (who had taken part in the Battle of Chrystler's Farm the year before). The British force consisted of about 1,500 regulars, including cavalry, a small number of militia and some 300 Indians. The attacking force was about 5,000 strong, 3,000 being regulars.

Captain White complains of the neglect to supply the invading troops with provisions—when they had travelled eighteen miles without provisions, volunteers were called for to drive off the hostile Indians who were firing on the pickets. With others the captain volunteered and "these were strengthened by several hundred Indians, the whole under the command of General Porter, Col. Bull and Major Galloway." Following the British Indians through the woods, they "came in full contact with the British regular line." The battle was going on in full vigour, and shortly after the

■

"whole British force fell back and being closely pressed by the American troops, retreated in confusion to their entrenchments about a quarter of a mile distant." This battle is considered by White to have been a brilliant victory for American arms. He says triumphantly, "The conquerors of the veterans of France were, in fact, defeated by a detachment from the American army * * the conduct of these men was heroic in the extreme: wherever they directed their fire or pointed their bayonets the boasted conquerors of the Peninsula fell or fled." How different the language of this early American from the modest self-depreciation we are familiar with in those who have followed him. There can be no doubt that the American troops engaged in this campaign showed much better quality than those who had invaded this region previously, and who had met with disaster at Queenston Heights.

At all events, victory or no victory, there were no British prisoners, and Riall carried off his men and guns, having destroyed his earthwork, while the losses on both sides were about equal. The President of the United States, Mr. James Madison, seems to have thought the invasion at the Niagara Frontier very successful: he says in his message of September 20th, 1814, "Besides the brilliant incidents in the minor operations of the campaign, the splendid victories gained on the Canadian side of the Niagara by the American forces under Major-General Brown, and Brigadiers Scott and Gaines have gained for these heroes and their emulating companions the most unfading laurels: and having triumphantly tested the progressive discipline of the American soldiery, have taught the enemy that the longer he protracts his hostile efforts, the more certain and decisive will be his final discomfiture." Can it be credited that notwithstanding this warning the Canadians and other British refused to lie down and take their licking? Why, they even claimed to have been successful themselves—but what will "monarchists" not do?

White and his friends Col. Bull and Major Galloway were taken prisoner by Indians, and Bull was almost

at once killed by them. The captain was afterwards informed by a "Canadian gentleman * * that the murder was committed in compliance with the order of Gen. Riall"—and he seems to try hard to believe this monstrous charge. (Colonel Campbell was desperately wounded in this campaign—the cap of his knee was carried away by a cannon shot, and he died in extreme agony. Major Richardson charges him with great barbarity toward his prisoners.)

Galloway and White were forced by their savage captors to run till they thought they would drop dead. Finally both were brought before Gen. Riall who asked a number of questions, "the truth of which I was determined he should not know from me"—they were then given in charge to sergeants of the British army who kept them all night behind the breast-works on the bare ground without tent or covering of any kind. It would seem that the soldiers were no better off; and the sergeant who had White in charge lent him an old watch-coat—"he also gave me a dram from his canteen."

On the third day thereafter, White hoped to escape, as an engagement seemed to be going on; but he was watched too closely. "Major Galloway, two of our volunteers, one Indian, myself and three or four Canadians who were in confinement on suspicion of being friendly to the American cause, were led into the field under a strong guard and halted to await the fate of the day." The British retreated to Lundy's Lane and then to Queenston Heights, where White had a narrow escape, a certain "fellow" charging him with being a deserter from an English regiment, and concluding "d—n you, I will have you hung." This peril passed over; they marched for Fort George and finally sailed for York on a vessel "so crammed with wounded men, that the other prisoners and myself were obliged to remain on deck the whole time of the passage from Fort George to York." On the march from Chippewa to

Fort George, a gentleman named Carr,* "a doctor," had kindly given the prisoner a \$20 bill to divide between himself and his friend in misfortune Major Galloway—and the British officers added another \$5 bill, while a dragoon officer sent them some tea and sugar, and a bottle of rum. White makes it a matter of great complaint that "all the time we drew rations we were never allowed any liquor, and got none except the one bottle thus made a present of," and compares this barbarous treatment with the treatment of prisoners in the American camp, where as "I know to be a fact * * the men belonging to my own company have gone without their liquor that prisoners might be better accommodated." Could self-denial and courtesy reach a higher point? And would the modern American be able to give up his Manhattan or Martini in like case?

At York† the prisoners were marched to a tavern where the landlady sold them two old shirts more than

*This was Dr. Robert Kerr who had been Surgeon to Sir John Johnson's Second Battalion: he settled in Newark (Niagara) and became Surgeon to the Indian Department. He had also a large private practice. In the war of 1812 he took an active part in a surgical way: afterwards he became Judge at the Surrogate Court of Niagara: and a Magistrate for the District. He was fond of sport and nicknamed the "boxing Magistrate." His wife was the daughter of Sir William Johnson and "Molly," sister of Brant; and his son became chief of the Mohawks. He was appointed by the Governor a member of the Medical Board for the examination of those applying for a license to practice—and seems to have been not only a most loyal but also a capable and humane physician and surgeon. Some may be interested to know that he was a Mason of high degree.

Dr. Robert Kerr was a member of the Land Board for the District of Nassau, appointed by Lord Dorchester to act from and after May 1, 1791, and afterwards he was a member of the Land Board for Lincoln County only. He was himself grantee of lots 29, 30 and 31 in the 2nd Concession of "Township No. 7."

His wife, Mrs. Elizabeth Kerr, was a woman of great natural ability, an accomplished lady and an author of no little merit; she wrote several very interesting books on the customs and religion of her mother's people. She and her husband passed most of their lives in Niagara.

†Surveyor-General Ridout, in a letter to his son at Cornwall, dated at York, Sunday, 10th July, 1814, gives a graphic account of the wounded and their arrival at York.

half worn for "the *moderate* price of eight dollars." Perhaps the landlady thought to get even with an American for the sack of York by his countrymen in May of the previous year. We hear much of the wanton destruction of Washington by the British forces, and find their conduct compared to that of the Barbarians of the middle ages—but it was no whit worse than the conduct of the American troops at Toronto and Niagara, of which we hear little, if anything.

Being ordered to Montreal they gave their parole, but "we did not profit much * * * for an hour had scarcely passed after we had signed the parole when we were ordered on board a Durham boat to be sent under guard to Kingston. The British officers on board when night came on went ashore and always took Galloway and myself with them: we lodged in a house convenient to the vessel, the other prisoners were suffered to remain on board under guard."

We know that while there was what was called a road from York to Kingston at that time (it had been built by Danforth, an American, about 1800) it was not too good, and part of the year was almost impassable—and it must occur to anyone that the prisoner was very fortunate in being carried on a Durham boat rather than plowing his way along on foot.

Landing at Ives' Creek, about 18 miles east of York, they put up for the night—White had been very unwell for some days, and there was taken so ill that he could not be moved. He remained in a very bad state for eight or ten days, putting up at Mr. Ives', and was given up by the medical man appointed by the Government to attend him. But his "better fortune brought an old Yankee Doctor, as they called him * * Mr. Ives' family physician, on a visit to the house—having seen me and examined the medicine which was administering to me, he pronounced my case as desperate but * * expressed an opinion that something might yet be done for me * * *". He changed the treatment and "whether it was owing to this change of practice or that the crisis of the disease had arrived," the prisoner began to get better almost at once. When he was con-

valescing he "had many visitors from several miles distance who always came after dark and returned the same night: they were very anxious to know what was the intention of the United States in sending troops into Canada, and if they had determined on taking it—if such they said was our intention, a powerful party in Canada might be raised to assist in the undertaking * * *. There were an immense number of men at that time disaffected with Government, and had the United States deemed it expedient, or possessed the means of sending a large army into Canada with the avowed purpose of freeing them from British Dominion, numbers would have flocked to our standard, and" adds the sanguine Pennsylvanian, "they might with reason have trembled for their possession."

Notwithstanding the general opinion and little flattering as it is to Canadians of that time, it must be admitted that there was undoubtedly a want of loyalty, or at least a want of willingness to fight the American invader, exhibited by the Canadian settler on more than one occasion, and at more than one place. A contemporary work published in 1813, at Philadelphia, written by one M. Smith, who was an American but who had lived in Upper Canada for some time before the war and had been allowed by the Government to leave the province on the outbreak of the war, a number of statements are made which are corroborated by facts which are well known. The book is called "A Geographical View of the Province of Upper Canada, etc." On page 87 he says, "It was generally thought in Canada if Hull had marched in haste from Sandwich to Fort George, the province would then have been conquered without the loss of a man * * Brock * * ordered some part of the militia from the District of London, about 100 miles from Sandwich, to march there. This many refused to do of their own accord, and others were persuaded so to refuse by a Mr. Culver, a Mr. Beamer, and one more who rode among the people for six days telling them to stand back. Whenever the officer came to warn the inhabitants to meet at such a place to receive arms and orders to march against

Hull, they promised to go; but instead of going they took some provision and went to the woods, and there waited in hopes that Hull would soon accomplish his promise, but, poor things, they were deceived and had 'o return and obey orders."

After the surrender of Hull "the people of Canada became fearful of disobeying the government; some that fled to the wilderness returned home, and the friends of the United States were discouraged and those of the King encouraged * * *" In the Talbot papers will be found some account of this trouble in the London District.

On p. 93. Smith says that about twelve days after the Battle of Queenston Heights "Col. Graham on Yonge Street, ordered his regiment to meet in order to draft a number to send to Fort George: however, about forty did not appear but went out into Whitechurch township, nearly a wilderness, and there joined about thirty more who had fled from different places. When the regiment met there were present some who had liberty of absence a few days from Fort George; these, with others, volunteered their services to Col. Graham to the number of 160, to go and fetch them in, to which the Colonel agreed but ordered them to take no arms, but when they found they must not take arms they would not go. At the first of December they had increased to about 300, about which time, as I was on my way to Kingston to obtain a passport to leave the province, I saw about 50 of them near Smith's Creek [now Port Hope] in Newcastle District on the main road with fife and drum, beating for volunteers, crying huzza for Madison [the President of the United States]. None of the people in this district bore arms at that time, except twelve at Presquile Harbour. They were universally in favour of the United States, and if ever another army is landed in Canada this would be the best place * * * many of the Canadian militia would desert * * * but * * * an army dare not rebel, not having now any faith in any offers of protection in a rebellion, as they have been deceived." This last refers to the promises made by Hull on the strength of which

several Canadians joined him, only to be left to their fate when Hull surrendered. It was reported that they were hanged; contemporary American reports state that they were shot at Fort George: whatever their fate, it was a deterrent.

About this time a boat load of marauders—though White does not call them that—landed near the creek, robbed the mail and took prisoner a Colonel of Militia and his son, also an officer in the militia—but they soon released them. Canadian history, so far as I know, does not mention this exploit.

It is probable that the story is an emendation of that of a real exploit which has been credited to the notorious "Bill" Johnston, "patriot" according to some, "pirate" according to others. It is said that shortly after burning a schooner lying nearly completed on the stocks at Presqu' Isle, he crossed over the bay and waylaid the mail at a spot about half way between what are now Brighton and Smithfield villages. He with his gang demanded the mail bag from the boy who was carrying it on horseback, and having received it, let the boy and horse go. This version is given in the Ont. Hist. Soc. Papers, vol. 5, p. 70; but Bill Johnston did not make his appearance as a "land pirate" till the troubles of 1837.

The real heroes will appear from the following extract from a report by Sir Gordon Drummond to Sir George Prevost dated at Kingston, July 17th, 1814, which reads in part: "I am concerned to inform Your Excellency that a gunboat and a Durham boat of the enemy landed a strong party at Presqu' Isle (Lake Ontario) in the night of the 1st instant where they burnt the store house of a Mr. Gibson and a small schooner which was building there by him."

The following is from "Boston Yankee" newspaper of July 15th, 1814, as an extract from a letter addressed to a gentleman in New York, and dated Sackett's Harbour, July 6th, 1814: "With pleasure I inform you of a small expedition (fitted out of this place on the 27th ult., and returned this day) of two whale boats carrying 15 men each, who succeeded in burning a bomb vessel of 90 tons, on the stocks ready for launching, to-

gether with a public building containing naval stores, at a place called Presq' Isle, directly opposite Oswego on the Canada shore."

Major Rogers† came along and said "he would not trust me, and that as soon as my health was sufficiently established * * he would have me carried into the country so as to be at a distance from the lake." And so it was—but in ten or twelve days the prisoner was put on board a boat in charge of Lieut. Norris, of the Canadian militia, to be taken to Kingston. "Rogers was

* * a militia officer, a devoted Monarchist, and in consequence of his zeal was then, though stationed at home, under full pay from his government, being kept there to have an eye to the inhabitants and prevent them from making their escape to the United States. In many places along Lake Ontario the inhabitants had deserted their homes and farms and made their way good to the United States: several were compelled to fly to save their lives as a single word said against the government at that time was sufficient to hang them."

That anyone who says a word against the Government is, under British rule, always hanged out of hand is, of course, a commonplace. White knew—for "those who were brought prisoners from Fort George to York at the time we were brought in there on suspicion of being friendly to the American cause, were as I afterwards understood, hanged, and some even without

† This Major Rogers was not Major Rogers of "Rogers' Rangers," the famous scout in Indian times, whose exploits were the groundwork of Fenimore Cooper's "Leather Stocking," etc., but his son David McGregor Rogers, who came to Upper Canada after the Revolutionary War. He settled in the Bay of Quinte, then moved to Presq' isle (then called Newcastle), and finally to Haldimand Township, near what is now Grafton. He became Clerk of the Peace, Postmaster, Member of the Legislature, Judge of the District Court, Registrar of Deeds. When member he generally supported the Government, but was sometimes accused of radical principles. He was member of every Assembly (except one) from 1796 till 1824—for that one he refused to be a candidate as he had a claim against the Government. He was active throughout the war and was a zealous patriot. A man of principle and integrity, his descendants do no discredit to him, but are well known and estimable members of society.

judge, jury or the common formalities of a trial." That is the sort of people these devoted monarchists are—as every one knows.

While there is no official record of anyone in this part of Upper Canada deserting to the United States, there were a few further east, and quite a number further west who did so—there are records still extant in Osgoode Hall as to many of these.

On arriving at Kingston he was ordered into close confinement at Major Rogers' instance, "for the mere gratification of his vile disposition and the venomous hatred he bore to everyone who professed republican principles: at home he bore the name of a tyrant and was generally despised." He was certainly a very bad one. Why, even when poor White was lying sick at Ives' Creek he came and strutted about in the sick room and said that the British had taken Washington, and "he (meaning myself) may as well die now as at any other time, as that will be his fate at all events." The American took up the cudgels for himself and his country and "had the pleasure to see him depart in no very enviable humour." And certainly no one can say that the Major did not richly deserve all he got.

"Between York and Kingston * * * a distance of about 200 miles, I do not recollect having seen one town either situate on or in view of the lake."

He was soon sent off to Montreal—near the Seven Islands they met a fleet of 110 boats, two of them gun-boats, and "with the timbers of a vessel built in England even to the last pin, and ready to put together to enable them to retain their superiority on Lake Ontario." This is perfectly true: the Home Government sent out ships in parts to be put together on the great lakes—at many times the cost of building them on the shores of the lakes themselves. But these ships were supplied with water-tanks and apparatus for distilling fresh water for these bodies of water, supposed at Westminster to be salt. This the ships would, I fear, have lacked if they had been built in Canada.

White had made up his mind to jump overboard and swim for it if he got near the American shore, but "nei-

ther bribe (of \$500) nor persuasion could induce" the Captain "to alter his course." Some fat bullocks smuggled over from New York he saw bought by the British Commissary for \$20 a hundred, all in gold—not a bad price. A plan to escape failed, as the Lieutenant locked the door and stayed with the prisoner, and "pointing to a table upon which lay his sword and pistols, gave me to understand that he would kill me if I made an attempt to escape." This man must have been a monarchist, too.

Arriving at Lachine on the way to Montreal, the party had to walk the nine miles intervening—on the way they espied a snug little farm house: by good luck the farmer turned out to be an American, and "he handed down a decanter of old whiskey, requesting us to help ourselves," and gave the wearied travellers a good breakfast, for all of which he absolutely refused to receive any recompense. We are not told how much, if any, old whiskey was left in the decanter for the farmer.

Montreal does not seem to have taken to the prisoners; for "as we passed along the streets, the citizens crowded their doors and pavements, and pointing to me, cried out 'there goes an American officer: he's a d——d pretty creature, is n't he?'" No wonder Captain White "was exceeding wroth, and had my power been equal then to my will, I would have taken ample vengeance."

From Kingston to Montreal "are nine smart little villages, viz., Prescott, Youngstown, Edwardsburg, Williamsburg, Osnaburg, Cromwell, Dulac, Cidris, Vaudril and LaChine." These names are recognizable still—even "Cromwell."

Montreal then had a population of about 6,000, and had a considerable trade in furs.

Several plans were made for escape, but none was implemented—one because the firm of "Ballas & Gaits," who "had made a splendid fortune by smuggling business," would not lend "\$50 to \$100" to the captives.

The prisoners were soon sent to Queb. —during the voyage the Captain treated them kindly, seating them at his own table, giving them brandy and wine, and supplying them with playing cards. But "this * * *

was too good to last long, and in three days we reached Quebec." A good description is given of this "large and handsome town * * the capital of Canada." There they met a number of other American prisoners; but the stay was short, for orders came to remove to Halifax. A plot was formed to take the ship as soon as she had got out of the St. Lawrence, and to compel the sailors to work the vessel into New York, but they got inside the Halifax coasters too soon, and "having no particular propensity for swinging, we abandoned the project * *" Halifax does not seem to have been a bad place to live at, but prices had even a century ago gone up, for "Major Galloway and I paid \$2 at a tavern for a couple of glasses of brandy each, and some oysters which were so bad we were forced to leave them untouched." It is true we are not told the size of these four glasses of brandy; and it is more than likely that a Pennsylvanian palate was not educated up to Canadian oysters.

The Americans "were one day not a little shocked at the arrival of a number of American soldiers who were entrapped and taken with Col. Boerstler in Upper Canada at some creek between Fort George and Little York by the British and their allies the Indians."

Col. Boerstler had been prominent in the attack on the posts near Fort Erie, in December, 1812; he was placed in command of the detachment to attack Lieutenant Fitzgibbon's position at Twelve Mile Creek near St. Catharines in June, 1813. Warned by the famous Laura Secord, the British forces were prepared for the attack and met the American army with a vigorous fusilade. Boerstler was himself wounded and soon surrendered with his whole force, some 550 in all.

Toward the end of February, 1815, peace being proclaimed, all the prisoners were released and made their way homeward.

"The soil of the province of Upper Canada is exceedingly good in every part * * * from the head of the Bay Quantie to the head of Lake Ontario, it is altogether a black, light, rich mould in most parts seven inches deep after which it is brown clay." A description is given of Rice Lake, Lake Simcoe and other

waters, not very far from the truth, as well as of the Mountain Lake§ in Prince Edward County on the top of a mountain 200 feet high.

It is a matter of regret to read that "in some parts of Upper Canada through which I passed, the people did not appear to pay the least respect to the Sabbath day. I have frequently seen women churning butter and baking bread, and men chopping wood and attending to divers other employments the same as on week-days," but they got their deserts, these Sabbath-breakers, for they have only "a substitute for coffee * * viz., dry crusts of bread put on the fire and burnt 'lack, then pounded fine and boiling water being poured upon it, it is suffered to rest for awhile when it is pronounced fit for use." Provisions of all sorts were "very scarce and dear. In * * Halifax beef was upwards of twenty cents per lb., turkey was fifty cents per lb., wheaten meal, though sour, was twenty-four dollars per bbl."

We leave Captain White at home in Adams County: our sympathy goes out to him on learning that when, at Boston, he called on the Pay Master for his pay, he could not get cash, but must take due bills—cashing these at the brokers he had to allow a discount of twenty per cent., some even twenty-five per cent. He took some Philadelphia paper, and when he went to pay his stage fare five per cent. more was deducted, thus "calculating the ten per cent. we paid at Halifax for borrowed money, twenty per cent. discount for cash at Boston, and five per cent. deducted by the stage proprietor made in all an allowance of thirty-five per cent. which we were compelled to pay." It must have been at least some satisfaction that the hated and despised Britisher got only ten of this, while those "who professed republican principles" got the lion's share of the prey.

§It is of this little lake (or another near it) that Smith in the work cited says: "It is very smooth. At different times the inhabitants have in the morning seen tracks, as if a large log had been drawn along from the bay to the lake. This was supposed to have been done by snakes."